



## BROTHERS IN ARMS

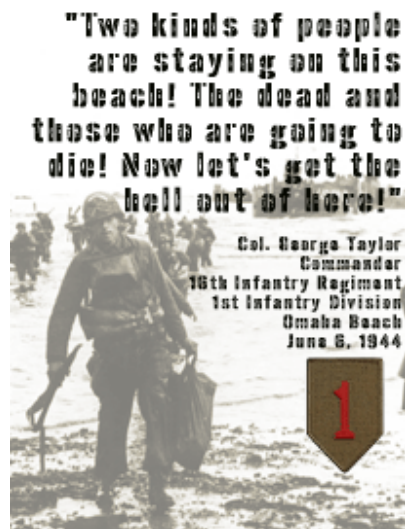
*Under V Corps command, active 1<sup>st</sup> and National Guard 29<sup>th</sup> Infantry Divisions led the assault on Omaha Beach side by side*

### The 1st Infantry Division "The Big Red One"

**Organized as the 1st Expeditionary Division on May 24, 1917 and redesignated as the 1st Division July 6, 1917**



The Allied plan for the assault of Europe on D-Day designated the 16th and 18th Regimental Combat Teams of the 1st Division, alongside the 116th and 115th Regimental Combat Teams of the 29th Division and the 2nd and 5th Ranger Battalions, as Force "O" for the initial attacks on Omaha Beach. The 16th and 116th made the first landings. The 16th came ashore on the eastern sectors of the beach at about 0630 on D-Day with the 116th on its right. Soon the 16th was fighting for its life on a strip of beach near Colleville-sur-Mer that had been marked "Easy Red" on the battle maps. The assault forces ran headlong into intense fire from German forces on the bluffs that dominated the entire beach. As casualties mounted, it appeared the assault might flounder. Many units suffered losses of nearly 30 percent in the first hour. As the assault progressed, others lost more than 60 percent and could do nothing but seek cover. Many landing craft did not make it to their assigned beach sectors, and unloaded wherever they happened to land. Communications equipment had been lost or destroyed, making outside



The advance from sector "Easy Red," the 1st Infantry Division's landing point on Omaha Beach on June 6, 1944.

contact impossible. The beach was in confusion, as many officers had been killed or wounded. Gen. Omar Bradley, commander of the American assault forces, considered diverting follow-up units to Utah Beach. Col. George Taylor, the 16th Regiment commander, seeing men bunched up and taking casualties from artillery and mortar fire, told his troops: "Two kinds of people are staying on this beach! The dead and those who are going to die! Now let's get the hell out of here!" Slowly they began to move inland, forcing their way up the bluff. Company G, 2nd

Battalion, 16th Infantry, led the way off Easy Red, up a draw through a minefield to the bluffs beyond. A German blockhouse above the beach became a command post named "Danger Forward". At about 1130, Bradley received a report that the deadlock had been broken. The 18th landed during mid-morning, and by late afternoon most of the division was ashore. The "Big Red One" had gained a foothold in Europe for the Allies.

## **The 29th Infantry Division "Blue and Gray"**

### **Constituted July 18, 1917 in the National Guard**



Under V Corps command, the 29th Infantry Division's 116th Infantry and the 111th Field Artillery Battalion found themselves in the vanguard of the Allied attack on June 6, 1944. The National Guard troops from Virginia, Maryland and the District of Columbia went ashore on Omaha Beach at H-Hour, D-Day. Casualties were extremely heavy; the 116th Regimental Combat Team faced some of the fiercest fighting of the day as it clawed its way through Les Moulins draw toward its objective, Vierville-sur-Mer. More than 300 men of the 116th were killed, while the 111th lost 11 of its 12 howitzers before even reaching the beach. Its commander, Lt. Col. Thornton Mullins, gained immortality by telling his troops, "To hell with our artillery mission. We're infantrymen now." Mullins was killed later that day. Among the members of Company A of the 116th, one of the first units to hit the beach, were 35 men from the small town of Bedford, Va. Within the first 15 minutes of the initial attack, 19 of those 35 men lost their lives. Two more died later that day. During the movement from Les Moulins the 2nd Battalion broke loose, clambered over the embankment, and a small party fought its way to a farmhouse



Loading LSTs for the invasion.

that became its first command post in France. The 29th had managed to secure its sector of the beachhead, seizing key terrain plus the cliffs on the right by nightfall.

For their actions on D-Day the 115th and 116th Regiments and the 121st Engineer Combat Battalion were awarded Presidential Unit Citations, and the division earned the French Croix de Guerre with Palm.